

Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

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INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
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TAGS: BBAK, EPAP, ETRD, ET, US, GW, YO, JA
SUBJECT: ETHIOPIA TO OPEN TRADE OFFICE

SUMMARY: ETHIOPIA WILL OPEN IN SEPTEMBER 1978, TRADE OFFICES
IN NEW YORK AND HAMBURG. ALTHOUGH THEIR MAIN CONCERN WILL
BE THE COFFEE TRADE, REPRESENTATIVES WILL ALSO PROMOTE
OTHER ETHIOPIAN PRODUCTS AS WELL AS INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES
(SIC). WITH THE EXPERIENCE GAINED FROM OPENING THESE TWO
OFFICES, THE PMGSE TENTATIVELY PLANS LATER TO OPEN SIMILAR
OFFICES IN TOKYO AND BELGRADE. END SUMMARY.

1. FOLLOWING THE EXPERIENCES OF SEVERAL COFFEE BOARD
DELEGATIONS WHICH WITHIN THE PAST YEAR HAVE VISITED ALMOST
ALL MAJOR WORLD COFFEE MARKETS, THE PMGSE HAS DECIDED TO OPEN
PERMANENT TRADE OFFICES IN FOUR LOCATIONS; NEW YORK, HAMBURG,
TOKYO AND BELGRADE. REPRESENTATIVES WILL BE SENT IN SEPTEMBER,
1978, TO OPEN OFFICES IN NEW YORK AND HAMBURG, WHILE
THE PROPOSED OFFICES IN TOKYO AND BELGRADE ARE SCHEDULED TO
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BE OPENED AT A LATER DATE, TO BE DETERMINED BY THE EXPERIENCE
GAINED FROM THE NEW YORK AND HAMBURG VENTURES.

2. THE MAIN TASK OF REPRESENTATIVES IS TO DEVELOP EXPERTISE
IN THE WORLD COFFEE TRADE. IN THE SHORT RUN THIS WILL BE IN
ORDER TO EXPAND OVERALL ETHIOPIANS COFFEE EXPORTS AND IMPROVE
PROFIT MARGINS, PARTICULARLY THOSE ACCRUING TO THE PARA-

STOTAL COFFEE MARKETING CORPORATION. IN THE LONG RUN, WITHIN THREE OR FOUR YEARS, IT IS EXPECTED THAT THE EXPERIENCE GAINED AND THE CONTACTS MADE WILL ENABLE THE PMGSE TO ESTABLISH A COMPLETE GOVERNMENT MONOPOLY ON ETHIOPIAN COFFEE EXPORTS.

3. GELAGAY ZAWDE HAS BEEN NAMED TO OPEN THE NEW YORK OFFICE. HE PLANS TO ARRIVE IN NEW YORK O/A SEPTEMBER 6. ACCORDING TO HIM, A SECONDARY ACTIVITY OF THE OFFICE WILL BE TO EXPAND ETHIOPIAN TRADE IN GENERAL, AND TO PROMOTE FOREIGN INVESTMENT IN ETHIOPIA.

4. IN RESPONSE TO EMBASSY OFFICER QUESTIONING BELGRADE AS SITE FOR EASTERN EUROPEAN OFFICE, GELAGAY SAID THAT TRADE PROBLEMS WITH EAST GERMANY, THE LARGEST EASTERN EUROPEAN IMPORTER OF ETHIOPIAN COFFEE, PROMPTED THE PMGSE TO TENTATIVELY SELECT BELGRADE.

COMMENT: THIS MOVE BY THE PMGSE IS AN ASTUTE ATTEMPT TO BOLSTER PAINFULLY OBVIOUS DEFICIENCIES IN THE GOVERNMENT'S ABILITY TO MANAGE ITS NUMBER ONE FOREIGN EXCHANGE EARNER. GELAGAY APPEARS TO BE PRACTICAL MAN WITH GOOD BUSINESS ACUMEN; HE SHOULD BE A GOOD REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE JOB. CHAPIN

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